



This article is an excerpt from *The Optimal Athlete's Snow Sports Issue*. To view the entire issue, please [click here](#).





## Ask the Expert

**Q** Is there anything other I can do to improve my snowboarding performance other than snowboarding?

I never would have thought that snowboarding would have been as popular a sport as it is today and while I haven't seen any specific studies on snowboarding, we can draw some logical conclusions about how you maybe able to improve your snowboard skills.

Anyone who has attempted snowboarding will quickly find out that it requires balance, coordination, strength and patience. Additionally, the sport requires the ability to stabilize the torso, flex and extend at the knees and hips and it would be helpful to be able to withstand some significant falls without getting injured. If you really want to be aggressive you will also need to be able to hold a bent knee position for a long run with out fatiguing the quads and/ or overworking the cardiovascular system.

I would recommend that at least 4 to 6 weeks before the season starts you begin a general strength and conditioning program for the whole body. If you have never done a strength and conditioning program, training three days per week will work best. During these sessions you can train your entire body with 3-4 sets per muscle group.

Now you maybe asking what exercise will be most beneficial to snowboarding. As we stated earlier, we will need focus on the muscles that flex and extend the knees and hips. These muscles are the quadriceps, gluteus or hips and the hamstrings. In order to stabilize the torso we will need strong abs and lower back muscles. And in order to potentially prevent any type of shoulder injuries we will focus on the shoulder muscles as well. That will take care of the strength training portion but in order to prevent fatigue we will need to develop some cardiovascular endurance. This can be addressed by continuous exercise for 30-60 minutes of cycling, running, hiking, swimming or similar activities of this nature.

Here is a sample program that you can start on:

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Strength Training Exercises	Squats	Lunges	Squats
	Bench Press	Push Ups	Bench Press
	Low Back Extensions	Crush	Low Back Extensions
	Pull Downs	Pull Ups	Pull Downs
Cardio Exercise 30-60 min	Treadmill	Stationary Bike	Treadmill

Perform 3 to 4 sets of ten repetitions on the strength training movements for the first 3 to 4 weeks. After that you can drop down the reps to 6-8 and increase the weights accordingly. In my opinion most people who don't like cardiovascular exercise are out of shape, so hang with it until your conditioning improves. If you are just starting off you can alternate between walking and jogging on the treadmill until you build some endurance. A good indicator of how hard you should be going is that you should be able to maintain a conversation with labored breathing. Running on the treadmill also activates the legs in a somewhat similar manner that the muscles are used while snowboarding. You can use the labored conversation guideline for the stationary bike as well. If you don't have access to a gym you can run and bike outside as well.

Good luck.

**Michael Barnes, MEd, CSCS\*D, NSCA-CPT\*D** earned his Masters degree in Human Performance from Auburn University. Mike most recently served as the Education Director for the National Strength and Conditioning Association and is currently the owner of Infinity Personal Training and Fitness, a personal training and fitness company headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO. Previous work experience includes, a Division I Strength and Conditioning Coach, Strength and Conditioning Coach for USA Rugby and seven years as the Strength Development Coordinator for the San Francisco Forty-Niners. Mike is a popular national speaker on strength and conditioning and has authored numerous publications as well.



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